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Dependent Origination

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PAṬICCA SAMUPPĀDA

3068

PIYADASSI THERA

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THE PĀLI ALPHABET

Vowels

a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, e, o

Consonants

k, kh, g, gh, ṅ
c, ch, j, jh, ñ
ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ
t, th, d, dh, n
p, ph, b, bh, m
y, r, l, v, s, h, ḷ, ṁ

Pronunciation of Letters

a	as	u	in	but	*ṭ*	as	t	in	cat
ā	„	a	„	art	*ḍ*	„	d	„	bad
i	„	i	„	pin	*ḍh*	„	d-h	„	red-hot
ī	„	ee	„	seed	*ṇ*	„	n	„	hint
u	„	u	„	put	*p*	„	p	„	lip
ū	„	u	„	rule	*ph*	„	ph	„	uphill
e	„	a	„	fate	*b*	„	b	„	rib
o	„	o	„	note	*bh*	„	bh	„	abhorrence
k	„	k	„	key	*m*	„	m	„	him
kh	„	ckh	„	blockhead	*y*	„	y	„	yard
g	„	g-h	„	pig-head	*r*	„	r	„	rat
ṅ	„	ng	„	ring	*l*	„	l	„	sell
c	„	ch	„	rich	*v*	„	v	„	vile
ch	„	ch-h	„	witch-house	*s*	„	s	„	sit
j	„	j	„	judge	*h*	„	h	„	hut
jh	„	dge-h	„	sledge-hammer	*l*	„	l	„	felt
					ṃ	„	ng	„	sing
ñ	„	gn	„	Mignon	*ṭh*	„	t-h	„	cat-head

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma-Sam-Buddhassa !

3068

INTRODUCTION

'Dependent Origination' - Paṭicca-Samuppāda - is a basic teaching of the Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism). The doctrine therein being so deep and profound it is not possible within the limited scope of this essay to make an extensive survey of the subject. Based solely on the teaching of the Buddha an attempt is made here to elucidate this doctrine, leaving aside the complex details involved.

Scholars and writers have in various forms rendered this term into English. 'Dependent Origination', 'Dependent Arising', 'Conditioned Co-production', 'Causal Genesis', 'Conditioned Genesis' are some renderings. Throughout this essay the term '*Dependent Origination*' is used. Dependent Origination is not a discourse for the unintelligent and superficial, nor is it a doctrine to be grasped by speculation and mere logic put forward by hair-splitting disputants. Hear these words of the Buddha:

'Deep, indeed, Ananda,[1] is this *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* and deep does it appear. It is through not understanding, through not penetrating this doctrine, that these beings have become entangled like a matted ball of thread, become like munja grass and rushes, unable to pass beyond the woeful states of existence and *saṁsāra*, the cycle of existence.'[2]

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[1] The attendant - disciple of the Buddha.

[2] *Mahā Nidāna Sutta, Digha N.*

Those who fail to understand the real significance of this all-important doctrine mistake it to be a mechanical law of causality, or, even a simple simultaneous arising, nay a first beginning of all things, animate and inanimate. Be it remembered that there is no First Cause with a capital '*F*' and a capital '*C*' in Buddhist thought, and Dependent Origination does not attempt to dig out or even investigate a first cause. The Buddha emphatically declared that the first beginning of existence is something inconceivable[1], and that such notions and speculations of a first beginning may lead to mental derangement[2]. If one posits a 'First Cause' one is justified in asking for the cause of that 'First Cause'; for nothing can escape the law of condition and cause which is patent in the world to all but those who will not see.

According to Aldous Huxley, 'Those who make the mistake of thinking in terms of a first cause are fated never to become men of science. But as they do not know what science is, they are not aware that they are losing anything. To refer phenomena back to a first cause has ceased to be fashionable, at any rate in the West . . . . . . We shall never succeed in changing our age of iron into an age of gold until we give up our ambition to find a single cause for all our ills, and admit the existence of many causes acting simultaneously, of intricate correlations and reduplicated actions and reactions.'[3]

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1. *Samyutta N., II, Anamatagga Samyutta, p. 179.*
2. *Anguttara N., IV. 77.*
3. *Ends and Means* (London 1945), pp. 14, 15.

A Creator - God, who rewards and punishes the good deeds and ill deeds of the creatures of his creation has no place in Buddhist thought. A theist, however, who attributes beings and events to an omnipotent Creator-God would emphatically say, 'It is God's will; it is sacrilege to question the Authority.' This god-idea stifles the human liberty to investigate, to analyse, to scrutinize, to see what is beyond this naked eye, and retards insight.

Let us grant for argument's sake that '*X*' is the 'first cause'. Now does this assumption of ours bring us one bit nearer to our goal, our deliverance? Does it not close the door to it? Buddhism, on the other hand, states that things are neither due to one cause (*ekahetuka*) nor are they causeless (*a-hetuka*): the twelve factors of *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* and the twenty four conditioning relations (*paccaya*) shown in the *Paṭṭhāna*, the seventh and the last book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, clearly demonstrate how things are 'multiple-caused' (*aneka-hetuka*); and in stating that things are neither causeless nor due to one single cause, Buddhism antedated modern science by twenty five centuries.

We see a reign of natural law — beginningless causes and effects—and naught else ruling the universe. Every effect becomes in turn a cause and it goes on for ever (as long as ignorance and craving are allowed to continue). A coconut, for instance, is the principal cause or near cause of a coconut tree, and that very tree is again the cause of many a coconut tree. '*X*' has two parents, four grand parents, and thus the law of cause and effect extends unbrokenly like the waves of the sea—ad infinitum.

It is just impossible to conceive of a first beginning. None can trace the ultimate origin of anything, not even of a grain of sand, let alone of human beings. It is useless and meaningless to go in search of a beginning in a beginningless past. Life is not an identity, it is a becoming. It is a flux of physiological aud psychological changes.

'There is no reason to suppose that the world had a beginning at all. The idea that things must have a beginning is really due to the poverty of our imagination. Therefore, perhaps, I need not waste any more time upon the argument about the first cause."[1]

Instead of a "First Cause", the Buddha speaks of Conditionality. The whole world is subject to the law of cause and effect, in other words, action and result. We cannot think of anything in this cosmos that is causeless and unconditioned.

As Viscount Samuel says: 'There is no such thing as chance. Every event is the consequence of previous events; everything that happens is the effect of a combination of multitude of prior causes; and like causes always produce like effects. The Laws of Causality and of the Uniformity of Nature prevail everywhere and always.'[2]

Buddhism teaches that all compounded things come into being, presently exist, and cease (*uppāda, ṭhiti* and *bhaṅga*), dependent on conditions and causes. Compare the truth of this saying with that oft-quoted verse of Arahat Thera Assaji,[3] one of the Buddha's first five disciples, who crystallized the entire teaching of the Buddha when

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1. Bertrand Russell, *Why I am not a Christian, p. 4.*
2. *Belief and Action,* Penguin Books, 1939, p. 16.
3. An Arahat is one who has cut himself off from all fetters of existence (*Sansāra*) and attained to perfect purity and peace through comprehending the Dhamma, the Truth.

answering the questions of Upatissa who later became known as Arahat Thera Sāriputta.

His question was: 'What is your teacher's doctrine? What does he proclaim?'

And this was the answer:

'*Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā tesaṁ hetuṁ tathāgato*
Āha tesaṁ ca yo nirodho evaṁ vādi mahāsamaṇo.'

Whatsoever things proceed from a cause,
The Tathāgata has explained the cause thereof,
Their cessation, too, He has explained.
This is the doctrine of the Supreme Sage.[1]

Though brief, this expresses in unequivocal words Dependent Origination, or Conditionality.

Our books mention that during the whole of the first week, immediately after His enlightenment, the Buddha sat at the foot of the Bodhi tree at Gaya, experiencing the supreme bliss of Emancipation. When the seven days had elapsed He emerged from that *Samādhi*, that state of concentrative thought, and during the first watch of the night[2] thought over the Dependent Origination in direct order thus: 'When this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises, namely: dependent on ignorance, volitional formations; dependent on formations, consciousness . . . and so on . . . Thus is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.'[3]

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[1] *Mahā Vagga*.

[2] First watch: from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., middle watch: from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., and the last watch: from 2 a.m. to 6 a.m.

[3] For the whole formula consisting of the 12 factors see the last pages of this essay.

Then in the middle watch of the night, He pondered over the Dependent Origination in reverse order thus: 'When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases, namely: with the utter cessation of ignorance, the cessation of volitional formations . . . and so on . . . Thus is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.'

In the last watch of the night, He reflected over the Dependent Origination both in direct order and reverse order thus: 'When this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases, namely: dependent on ignorance, volitional formations . . . and so on . . . Thus is the arising of this whole mass of suffering. But by the utter cessation of volitional formations . . . and so on . . . Thus is the ending of this whole mass of suffering.'[1]

One may justifiably be inclined to pose the question: Why did not the Tathāgata set forth the doctrine of 'Dependent Origination' in His first discourse,[2] the sermon delivered to the five ascetics, His erstwhile companions, at Saranath, Benares? The answer is this: The main points discussed in that all-important sermon are the four Noble Truths: suffering, its cause, its destruction, and the way to the destruction of suffering, the Noble Eightfold Way. There is no word in it about 'Dependent Origination'; but he who understands the philosophical and doctrinal significance of the Dependent Origination certainly understands that the twelvefold *Paṭicca - Samuppāda*, 'Dependent

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1. *Udāna, p. 1.*
2. *Dhammacakka-pavattana Sutta Samyutta N.*

Origination', both in its direct order (*anuloma*) and reverse order (*paṭiloma*) are included in the four Noble Truths.

The *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* in its direct order manifests the process of becoming (*bhava*), in other words, the appearance of suffering (*dukkha*, the first Truth); and how this process of becoming or suffering is conditioned (*dukkha-samudaya*, the second Truth). In its reverse order the *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* makes plain the destruction of this becoming (*dukkha-nirodha*, the third Truth) and the cessation of conditions, or the destruction of suffering (*dukkha nirodha gāmini paṭipadā*, the fourth Truth). The Buddha-word with regard to this fact appears in the Anguttara Nikāya thus:

'And what, monks, is the Noble Truth of the Arising of Suffering?

'Dependent on ignorance arise volitional formations; dependent on volitional formations, consciousness; dependent on consciousness, mentality-materiality (mental and physical combination); dependent on mentality-materiality the sixfold base (the five physical sense organs and consciousness as the sixth); dependent on the sixfold base, contact; dependent on contact, feeling; dependent on feeling, craving; dependent on craving, clinging; dependent on clinging, the process of becoming (rebirth); dependent of the process of becoming, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair come to pass. Thus does the whole mass of suffering arise.

'This, monks, is called the Noble Truth of the Arising of Suffering.

And what, monks, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering?

'Through the entire cessation of ignorance cease volitional formations; through the cessation of volitional formations, consciousness . . . and so on . . . the cessation of the whole mass of suffering. This monks, is called "the Cessation of Suffering".'[1]

It is now abundantly clear from the foregoing that the *Paṭicca-Samuppāda*, with its twelve factors, is the teaching of the Tathāgata and not as some are inclined to think the work of some writers on the Dhamma of later times. It is unreasonable, nay dangerous, to rush into conclusions without fully understanding the significance of the *Paṭicca-Samuppāda*. Dependent Origination, or the doctrine of conditionality, is often explained in severely practical terms, but it is not a mere pragmatical teaching, though it may appear to be so, owing to such explanations resorted to for brevity's sake. Those conversant with the Tipiṭaka (the Buddhist Canon) know that in the teachings of the *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* is found that which brings out the basic principles of knowledge (*ñāṇa*) and wisdom (*paññā*) in the Saddhamma, the Good Law. In this teaching of the conditionality of everything in the world, that is the five aggregates, can be realized the essence of the Buddha's outlook on life. So if the Enlightened One's explanation of the world is to be rightly understood, it has to be through a full grasp of this central teaching summed up in the dictum, '*Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā* . . . ." referred to above.

The doctrine of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, is not the work of some divine power; it is not a creation. Whether a Buddha arises or not the fact that '*this being, that becomes; by the arising of this, that arises; this not being, that becomes not; by the cessation of this, that ceases to be*' — this conditionality goes on for ever, uninterrupted and uncontrolled by an external agency or power of any sort. The Buddha discovered this eternal truth, solved the riddle of life, unravelled the mystery of being by comprehending, in all its fullness, the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* with its twelve factors, and expounded it, without keeping back aught that is essential, to those who yet have sufficient intelligence to wish for Light.

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[1] *Anguttara N, I. 1.76.*

I. IGNORANCE (AVIJJĀ)

Let us now deal with the twelve factors of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, one by one, in due order. The first point for discussion is *Avijjā* (Sanskṛit *avidyā*), Ignorance. *Moha* and *Aññāṇa*, or delusion and non-knowledge, are synonyms for *avijjā*. What is *avijjā*? It is the non-knowledge of Enlightenment, Supreme Wisdom (*Bodhi*). In other words, not knowing the four Noble Truths. It is also not-knowing of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, or conditionality, which teaches, '*This being, that becomes*'. Owing to this nescience, the uninstructed entertain wrong views. They regard the impermanent as permanent, the painful as pleasant, the soulless as soul, the godless as god, the impure as pure, and the unreal as real. Further, *Avijjā* is the non-perception of the conglomerate nature of the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*), or mind and body.

Ignorance or delusion is one of the root causes of all unwholesome actions, all moral defilements (*akusala*). All conceivable wrong notions are the result of ignorance. Independently of this crowning corruption no ill action, whether mental, verbal or physical could be performed. That is why ignorance is enumerated as the first link of the chain of the twelvefold *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Nevertheless, ignorance should not be regarded as a *prima causa*, a first beginning, or an ultimate origin of things. It is certainly not the First Cause; there is no conception of a First Cause in Buddhist thought. The doctrine of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* can be illustrated by a circle (see diagram); for it is the cycle of existence, *bhava cakka*. In a circle any given point may be taken as the starting point. Each and every factor of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* can be joined together with another of the series, and therefore, no single factor can stand by itself nor function independently of the rest. All are interdependent and inseparable. Nothing is independent, or isolated. Dependent Origination is an unbroken process. In this process nothing is stable or fixed, but all in a whirl. It is the arising of ever changing conditions dependent on similar evanescent conditions. Here there is neither absolute non-existence nor absolute existence, only bare phenomena roll on: *Suddha dhammā pavattanti*.

Ignorance, the first factor of the series, therefore, is not the sole condition for volitional formations, the second factor (*saṁkhāra*). A tripod, for instance, is supported by its three legs; it stands upright because of the interdependence of the legs. If one gives way, the other two fall to the ground unsupported. So, too, the factors of this *Paṭicca Samuppāda* support one another in various ways.

II. VOLITIONAL FORMATIONS (SAṄKHĀRĀ)

Avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā (Skt. *saṁskārāḥ*), dependent on Ignorance arise rebirth-producing Volitional Formations. The term *saṅkhāra* has also another meaning. In the statement, '*sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā*' or '*aniccā vata saṅkhārā*' (all compounded things are impermanent), the term '*saṅkhāra*' applies to all compounded and conditioned things, i.e., all things that come into being as the effect of causes and conditions and which, themselves, act as causes and conditions in turn again to give rise to other effects. In the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* however, *sankhāra* is restricted to mean simply all good and evil actions (*kusula-akusala kamma*), all actions, physical, verbal and mental (*kāya saṅkhāra, vacī saṅkhāra*, and *citta saṅkhāra*) which will bring about reactions. It is difficult to give a satisfactory English equivalent to the term *saṅkhāra*. Let us, therefore, understand it in this context as rebirth-producing volitional activities, or volitional formations or simply as *kamma* (Skt. *karma*).

Ignorance, *avijjā*, which has taken root in man is the blindness that prevents a man from seeing his actions as they really are, and so it allows craving to drive him on to further actions. If there were no ignorance there would be not such actions (*saṅkhāra*). In the absence of actions conditioned by ignorance, there will be no rebirth, and the whole mass of suffering will cease. In order to exemplify how the twelve factors of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* act upon a connected sequence of lives, the formula has been conceived as extending over three consecutive existences, past, present and future.

Ignorance and Volitional Formations belong to the previous birth. Wholesome *saṅkhāras* are capable of bringing about a good rebirth, i. e., birth in a good state of existence. Unwholesome *saṅkhāras* can cause a bad rebirth or birth in an evil state of existence. It must be mentioned that all *saṅkhāras*, all good and evil actions, have ignorance as condition Here a question may be raised as to how actions conditioned by ignorance could bring about good rebirth.

All attainment of good (*kusala*), from the state of the virtuous worldling (*kalyāṇaputhujjana*) and the 'lesser stream-winner' (*cūlasotāpanna*) to that of the consummate one (*arahat*) is due to the balance of knowledge over delusion and of detachment over craving. Good actions are the direct consequence of whatever clear understanding there may be in the doer. It is not because of delusion and craving that a man gives up killing etc., but because he has the wisdom to see the evil consequences of such actions and also because he is moved by such qualities as compassion and virtue. It is not possible except for the perfect ones to act from complete knowledge or detachment. To the generality of men such knowledge is unthinkable. As Eddington says, "If 'to know' means 'to be quite certain of' the term is of little use to those who wish to be undogmatic".[1] And if to be detached means to be neutral always such detachment is for the imperfect quite impossible, and meaningless. But occasional detachment is possible, and a measure of knowledge adequate for understanding the good is available for an intelligent man of virtue, for producing actions that are wise and unsoiled by the yearning for rewards in this life. There is much that is done in the world today with no hope of reward, or recognition, out of compassion or for the furtherance of knowledge, peace, and so forth. Such actions definitely are based on knowledge and detachment, not perhaps in the dogmatic, scholastic, or merely metaphysical sense, but in the light of sane, undogmatic thought. Good actions may well have ulterior motives, for instance, the yearning for the fruits of the good; but even in such instances, though tainted by greed and to that extent by delusion, there are in such good actions, for instance in liberality, the detachment to let go and the knowledge of seeing the evils of not giving at all, and the advantage of giving. The presence of craving and ignorance in a person does not mean that he can never act with knowledge and detachment.

Now it must also be understood that although man is capable of performing good actions unsoiled by strong desire for rewards in this life, there may be in him, unconsciously working, a tender longing for good rebirth, or a feeling of desire for rewards in the hereafter. Again, though he may be doing an action out of compassion and without any ulterior motives, he may still be lacking in full awareness of the real nature of life—its being impermanent, sorrow-stricken, and void of an abiding entity or soul. This non-knowledge of the real nature of life, though not so gross and strong as the delusion that induces a heinous act, can yet induce karmically wholesome action leading to a good rebirth. A good rebirth even in the heavens is, however, temporary and may be followed immediately by an unhappy rebirth.

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[1] *The Philosophy of Physical Science*, p. i, Cambridge University Press, 1939.

Such non-knowledge motivates and colours the good act. If, for instance, the performance of good actions is motivated by the desire for the resultant happiness in a good rebirth in a heavenly realm. or on earth, then that is the ignorance of the impermanence and unsatisfactory nature of all existence, which becomes a condition of good rebirth — i. e. an inducement - or support condition (*Upanissaya paccaya*). In these, and other ways, ignorance may act as a condition of good rebirth by motivating or colouring good volitional activities (*sankhārā*) of a mundane (*lokiya*) nature. Such is the intrinsic nature of ignorance.

Ignorance of the real nature of life is primarily the ignorance of the four Noble Truths. It is because of this non-knowledge of the Truths that 'beings' take birth again and again. Says the Buddha:

'Monks, it is through not understanding, not penetrating the four Noble Truths that we have run so long, wandered on so long in this long long way, both you and I . . . . But when these four Noble Truths are understood and penetrated, rooted out is the craving for existence, destroyed is that which leads to renewed becoming, and there is no more coming to be'.[1]

Only the actions of a man who has entirely eradicated all the latent tendencies (*anusaya*), and all the varied ramifications of sorrow's cause, are incapable of producing rebirth; for such actions are issueless. He is the Arahat, the Perfect One, whose clarity of vision, whose depth of insight penetrates into the deepest recesses of life, in whom craving has quite ceased through cognizing the true nature that underlies all appearance. He has transcended all appearance. He has transcended all capacity for error through the perfect immunity which penetrative Insight, *vipassanā*, alone can give. He is, therefore, released from ignorance (*avijjā*) and his actions no more bring about rebirth.

III. CONSCIOUSNESS (VIÑÑĀṆA)

Saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇaṁ (skt. *Vijñāna*), dependent on rebirth-producing Volitional Formations belonging to the previous birth, arises Consciousness or *viññāṇa* (re-linking or rebirth consciousness). To express it in another way, dependent on the *kamma* or good and evil actions of the past, is conditioned the conscious life in this present birth. Consciousness, therefore, is the first factor (*nidāna*), or first of the conditioning links belonging to the present existence. *Avijjā* and *saṅkhārā*, ignorance and volitional formations, belonging to the past, together produce *viññāṇa*, consciousness in this birth. We read in the

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[1] *Dīgha Nikāya*, Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta; *Saṅyutta N.*, v, 430; *Vin.* I, 231.

Mahā Nidāna Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya, how 'once ignorance and craving are destroyed good and evil actions no more come into being, consequently no more rebirth consciousness will spring up again in a mother's womb'. Hence it is clear that rebirth is caused by one's own good and evil actions, and it is not the work of a supreme being, a Creator-God, nor is it due to mere chance.

As this consciousness or *viññāna* is the first of the stream of consciousness (*citta santati*) belonging to one single existence (*bhava*), it is also known as *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*, re-linking consciousness. The term *paṭisandhi* literally means re-linking, re-uniting, re-joining. It is rebirth, re-entry into the womb. Rebirth is the arising, the coming to be, the being born, in the future (*paṭisandhīti āyatiṁ uppatti*). It is called re-uniting because of its linking back the new existence to the old (*bhavantara paṭisandhānato paṭisandhīti vuccati*). The joining back of the new to the old is the function of re-uniting or re-linking. Therefore, it is said, the function of re-uniting is the joining together of (one) existence with (another) existence (*bhavato bhavassa paṭisandhānaṁ paṭisandhi kiccaṁ*). *Paṭisandhi-viññāṇa* is the kamma-resultant consciousness (*vipāka viññāṇa*.) present at rebirth, connecting the new existence with the immediately preceding one, and through that with the entire past of the 'being' re-born. This resultant consciousness is due to previous rebirth-producing volitional formations (*saṅkhārā* or *kamma*).

In the *Āneñjasappāya Sutta*,[1] the *vipāka viññāṇa is* referred to as '*saṁvattanikaṁ viññāṇaṁ*', the consciousness that links on, proceeds in one life as *vipāka* from the *kamma* in the former life.

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[1] *Majjhima N., 106.*

When it is said, 'the consciousness that links on', it does not mean that this consciousness abides unchanged, continues in the same state without perishing throughout this cycle of existence. Consciousness is also conditioned, and, therefore, is not permanent. Consciousness also comes into being and passes away yielding place to new consciousness. Thus this perpetual stream of consciousness goes on until existence ceases. Existence in a way is consciousness. In the absence of consciousness no 'being' exists in this sentient world.

According to the modern science of biology 'a new human life begins in that miraculous instant when a sperm cell from the father merges with an egg cell or ovum within the mother'. This is the moment of birth. Science speaks of only these two physical common factors. Buddhism, however, speaks of a third factor which is purely psychical.

According to the *Mahātaṇhāsaṁkhaya Sutta*[1] 'By the conjunction of three factors does conception take place. If mother and father come together, but it is not the mother's proper season, and the being-to-be-reborn (*gandhabba*) does not present itself, a germ of life is not planted. If the parents come together, and it is the mother's proper season, but the *gandhabba* is not present, so long there is no conception. If the mother and father come together, and it is the mother's proper season, and the *gandhabba* also presents itself, then a germ of life is there planted'.

This third factor, *gandhabba*, is simply a term for the '*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*', re-linking consciousness. There is the last moment of consciousness (*cuti citta*) belonging to the immediately previons life. Immediately next upon the cessation of that consciousness there arises the first moment of consciousness of the present birth, which as stated above, is termed re-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāna*). Between these two moments of consciousness, however, there is no interval, there is no *Antarābhava* or *Antarābhava-satta* which means, 'either a being in the womb or a being in between the state of death and that of rebirth', as some of the *Mahāyāna* schools of thought maintain. It should be clearly understood that this re-linking consciousness is not a 'self' or a 'soul' or an ego entity that experiences the fruits (*vipāka*) of good and evil deeds. The *Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhaya Sutta* records the following incident:

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[1] *Majjhima N.*, *38.*

During the time of the Buddha there was a monk called Sāti who entertained the following view: "In so far as I understand *dhamma* taught by the Lord, it is that this consciousness itself runs on, fares on, not another".

The monks who heard of this endeavoured to dissuade Sāti, saying, "Do not, Brother Sāti, speak thus, do not misrepresent the Lord; neither is misrepresentation of the Lord seemly, nor would the Lord speak thus. For, Brother Sāti, in many a figure is dependent origination spoken of in connection with consciousness by the Lord, saying: 'Apart from condition there is no origination of consciousness".

But Sāti would not change his view. Thereupon the monks reported the matter to the Buddha who summoning him, spoke to him thus:

"Is it true, as is said, that a pernicious view like this has accrued to you, Sāti: 'In so far as I understand *dhamma* taught by the Lord, it is that this consciousness itself runs on, fares on, not another?"—"Even so do I, Lord, understand *dhamma* taught by the Lord:" it is that this consciousness itself runs on, fares on, not another'.

"What is this consciousness, Sāti ?"

"It is this, Lord, that speaks, that feels, that experiences now here, now there, the fruition of deeds that are lovely and that are depraved".

"But to whom, foolish man, do you understand that *dhamma* was taught by me thus? Foolish man, has not consciousness generated by conditions been spoken of in many a figure by me, saying: Apart from condition there is no origination of consciousness? But now you, foolish man, not only misrepresent me because of your own wrong grasp, but you also injure yourself and give rise to much demerit which, foolish man, will be for your woe and sorrow for a long time".[1]

In the words of the Buddha, the *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* is a very deep and intricate doctrine, and in this difficult doctrine the most subtle and deep point, difficult to grasp, is this third link, consciousness, *viññāṇa* or *paṭisandhi viññāṇa;* for it is this link that explains rebirth.

IV. MENTALIY-MATERIALITY (NĀMA-RŪPA)

Viññāṇa paccāya nāma-rūpam (equal in Pāli and Skt.), dependent on consciousness arises mentality-materiality. The term *nāma* here stands for the mental states (*cetasika*), in other words, the three mental groups: namely, Feeling (*vedanākkhandha*). Perception (*saññākkhandha*), Volitional Formations (*saṅkhārakkhandha*).

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[1] The quoted passages are from *The Middle Length Sayings I*, P. T. S. (London, 1954), translation of *Majjhima Nikāya*, Vol. 1, Sutta No 38.

The so called 'being' (*satta*, Skt. *sattva*) is composed of five aggregates or groups (*pañcakkhandha*); namely, physical body, feeling, perception, volitional formations and consciousness (*rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhārā* and *viññāṇa*). If consciousness is taken as the mind, then feeling, perceptions and volitional formations are the concomitants or factors of that mind. Now when we say dependent on consciousnes arises *nāma-rūpa*, mentality-materiality, materiality means the physical body, its organs, faculties and functions. Mentality means the factors of the mind mentioned above. In other words, *viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpaṁ* means, dependent on consciousness arise the three mental-concomitant factors (feeling, perception and volitional formations) that compose mentality, along with the conascent material body in its first embryonic stage.

Consciousness and its factors (*citta-cetasika*) are always interrelated and interdependent. Consciousness cannot arise and function independently of its factors, nor can the factors arise and function without the consciousness. They arise simultaneously (*sahajāta-paccaya*) and have no independent existence.

V. THE SIXFOLD BASE (SALĀYATANA)

Nāma-rūpa paccayā salāyatanam (Skt. *s'aḍāyatana*), dependent on mentality-materiality arises the sixfold base, the five physical sense organs, eye, ear, nose, tongue and body, and the mind base (*manāyatana*). '*Manāyatana*' is a collective term for the many different classes of consciousness, i.e. for the five kinds of sense-consciousness, and the many kinds of mind-consciousness. Hence, five bases are physical phenomena, namely eye, ear, etc , and the sixth base is identical with consciousness'.[1]

The function of *viññāṇa*, consciousness, is varied. The third factor of the chain is made known to us as *viññāṇa*; now here again we hear of a sixth base, *manāyatana*, which is identical with consciousness, but here by *manāyatana* different types of consciousness are meant. It should be borne in mind that consciousness is not something that is permanent and everlasting; it is fleeting, and undergoes change, not remaining the same for two consecutive moments; it comes into being and immediately passes away yielding place to new consciousness. 'These mental phenomena are, as it were, only the different aspects of those units of consciousness which like lightning every moment flash up and immediately thereafter disappear for ever.'[2]

If there were no *nāma-rūpa* (mentality-materiality) no *saḷāyatana* (sixfold base) could arise. Because of *rūpa* the physical sense organs eye, ear, etc. appear, and because of *manāyatana* (different types of consciousness) the physical sense organs function. Thus *nāma-rūpa* and *saḷāyatana* are inescapably interrelated and inter-dependent.

VI. CONTACT (PHASSA)

Saḷāyatana paccayā phasso (Skt. *Spars'a*), dependent on the sixfold base arises contact. In the preceding proposition we saw sixfold base or *āyatanas*, eye, ear, etc , they are internal bases (*ajjhattika-āyatana*). External to one's material body there are the corresponding five sense objects, form, sound, odour, taste, and tactile object and further, the mental objects. These are known as the six external bases (*bāhira-āyatana*). These external bases are food for man's internal bases. Hence they are inter-related. Although there is this functional relationship between these six sensitivities and their objects, awareness comes with *viññāṇa*, or consciousness. Hence it is said, 'If consciousness arises because of eye and forms it is termed visual consciousness.'

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[1] Nyānātiloka, Fundamentals of Buddhism (Colombo,1949), p. 67.
[2] Ibid, p. 65.

Now when eye and forms are both present, visual consciousness arises dependent on them. Similarly with ear and sounds, and so on down to mind and mental objects (ideas). Again, when the three, namely, eye, forms and eye-consciousness, come together, it is their coincidence that is called 'contact' (or impression). From contact there arises feeling, and so on.[1]

Thus it is clear that contact (*phassa*) is conditioned by both the internal sixfold base (*ajjhatthika-āyatana*) and the external sixfold base (*bāhira-āyatana*).

In brief, dependent on the sixfold base arises contact or impressions, means : The visual contact conditioned by the eye; the sound contact conditioned by the ear; the smell contact conditioned by the nose; the taste contact conditioned by the tongue; the bodily contact conditioned by the body; the mental contact conditioned by the mind.

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[1] Madhupiṇḍika Sutta, 18, and Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhaya Sutta, 38, of Majjhima Nikāya.

VII. FEELING (VEDANĀ)

Phassa paccayā vedanā (equal in Pāli and Skt), dependent on Contact arises Feeling. Feeling is sixfold: Feeling born of visual contact; feeling born of sound contact; feeling born of smell contact; feeling born of taste contact; feeling born of body contact and feeling born of mental contact.

Feeling may be pleasurable (*sukha*), painful (*dukkha*), or neutral, i.e. neither pleasurable nor painful (*adukkha-m-asukha=upekkhā*).

As stated in the preceding clause, sense objects can never be cognised by the particular sensitivity without the appropriate kind of consciousness, but when these three factors come together there arises contact. With the arising of contact simultaneously there arises feeling (*vedanā*) and it can never be stopped by any power or force. Such is the nature of contact and feeling. The experiencing of desirable or undesirable kamma-results of good and evil actions performed here or in a previous birth, is one of the prior conditions due to which feeling can arise.

Seeing a form, hearing a sound, smelling an odour, tasting a flavour, touching some tangible thing, cognising a mental object (idea) man experiences feeling; but it cannot be said that all beings experience the same feeling with the same object. An object, for instance, which may be felt agreeable by one, may be felt unpleasant by another, and neutral by still another. Feeling also may differ in accordance with circumstances. A sense object which once evoked unpleasant feelings in us, may possibly produce pleasant feelings in us under different circumstances, in a totally different background — geographical conditions, climatic conditions, etc. Thus we learn how feeling is conditioned by contact.

VIII. CRAVING (TAṆHĀ)

Vedanā paccayā taṇhā (Skt. *tṛṣṇā*), dependent on feeling arises craving. Craving has its source, its genesis, its rise in feeling. All forms of appetite are included in *taṇhā*. Greed, thirst, desire, lust, burning, yearning, longing, inclination, affection, household love are some of the many terms that denote *taṇhā* which in the words of the Buddha is the Leader to Becoming (*bhava netti*). Becoming which manifests itself as *dukkha*, as suffering, frustration, painful excitement, is our own experience. The enemy of the whole world is lust or craving through which all evils come to living beings. Mankind is entangled in a tangle. Through clear understanding of craving, the origin of craving, the cessation of craving, the true way of practice leading to the cessation of craving, one disentangles this tangle.

What then is craving? The Buddha's answer to this question is: 'It is that craving which leads from rebirth to rebirth accompanied by passionate delight, which rejoices now here, now there'.[1] 'Where does craving arise and take root? Where there is the delightful and the pleasurable, there craving arises and takes root. Forms, sounds, smell, taste, bodily contacts and ideas are delightful and pleasurable, there craving arises and takes root.[2]

Craving when obstructed by some cause is transformed to wrath and frustration. 'From craving arises grief, from craving arises fear. To one free from craving there is no grief. Whence fear?'[3]

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1. *Samyutta N., LVI, 11 Dhammacakka pavattana Sutta.*
2. *Digha N. 22.*
3. *Dhammapada, 216.*

Man is always attracted by the pleasant and the delightful, and in his search for pleasure he ceaselessly runs after the six kinds of sense objects and clings to them. He little realizes that no amount of forms. sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles and mental objects will ever satisfy the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and the mind. In this intense thirst for either possessions or the satisfaction of desires mankind gets bound to the wheel of *saṁsāra*, is twisted and torn between the spokes of agony, and securely closes the door to final deliverance. The Buddha has been most emphatic against this mad rush, and in the Sutta Nipāta(v.61) warns :

> '. . . . Be sure
> pleasure's a chain, brief bliss,
> short rapture, long-drawn woe,
> a baited hook for fools.'[1]

All mundane pleasures are fleeting ; like sugar-coated pills of poison they deceive us, insidiously working harm.

Whenever craving for these objects is connected with sensual pleasures it is called 'Sensuous Craving' (*kāma-taṇhā*). When it is associated with the belief in eternal personal existence, then it is called 'Craving for Existence' (*bhava taṇhā*). This is what is known as *sassata diṭṭhi* or eternalism. When craving is associated with the belief in self-annihilation at death, then it is called 'Craving for Self-annihilation' (*vibhava-taṇhā*). This is what is known as *uccheda-diṭṭhi* or nihilism.

Craving is conditioned not only by pleasurable and agreeable feelings, but by unhappy and unpleasant feelings, too. A man in distress craves and thirsts to get rid of it, and longs for happiness and release. To express it in another way, the poor and the needy, the sick and the disabled, in brief, all sufferers, crave for happiness, security and solace. On the other hand, the rich, the healthy who have not glimpsed the sufferings of the distressed, and who are already experiencing pleasure, also crave. They crave and long for more and more pleasure. Thus craving is insatiable. As cattle go in search of fresh pasture so do men go in quest of fleeting pleasures, constantly seeking fuel for this life-flame. Their greed is inordinate.

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[1] *Buddha's Teachings*, transl. by Lord Chalmers. Harvard University Press.

'The whole world,' says the Buddha, 'is in flame, the whole world is consumed by fire. All is in flames. And what is the 'all' that is in flames? The five sense organs and the five sense objects are burning. Mind and thoughts are burning. The five aggregates of grasping (*pañca upādānakkhandhā*) are burning. With what are they burning? With the fire of craving, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion.' Craving is an insatiable fire; and no fire is ever contented. Such is the nature of this corruption that spreads right up to the highest plane of existence with respect to spheres, and right up to the *gotrabhu citta*, the threshold of sainthood, with respect to mind-flux. Where there is no self-desire, there indeed, is no sense desire either; and where there is no self-desire there all ill dies out like a flame whose fuel is spent.

It is only when suffering comes, as its consequence, and not before, that one realizes the viciousness of this poisonous creeper of craving which winds itself round all who are not Arahats or perfectly pure ones who have uprooted its tap-root, ignorance. The more we crave, the more we suffer; sorrow is the tribute we have to pay for having craved. Wherefore, know this craving as our foe here, in *saṁsāra*, that guides us to continued and repeated sentient existence, and so builds the 'House of Being'.

The Master on attaining full Enlightenment formed the following thought:

'Through many a birth wandered I in Sansara, seeking for the builder of the house, and finding him not; painful is birth again and again.

'O builder of the house, thou art seen, thou shalt not build a house again. Broken are all thy rafters, shattered is thy ridge-pole. My mind has attained the Unconditioned (Nibbāna), attained is the extinction of craving.[1]

IX. CLINGING (UPĀDĀNA)

Taṇhā paccayā upādānaṁ (equal in Pāli and Skt.), dependent on Craving arises Clinging. This is the mental state that clings to, or grasps the object even as a piece of raw meat that sticks to a sauce-pan. Because of this clinging which is described as craving in a high degree, man becomes a slave to passion, and falls into the net he himself has made of his passion for pleasure, like the caterpillar that spins itself a tangle in which it lives.

Clinging (or Attachment; *upādāna*) is four-fold: (i) Attachment to sensuous pleasures or sense desires (*kāma-upādāna*); (ii) attachment to wrong and evil views (*diṭṭhi upādāna*); (iii) attachment to mere external observances—rites and rituals — (*sīlabbata upādāna*) and (iv) attachment to self, or a lasting soul-entity (*attavāda upādāna*).

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[1] *Dhammapada, v. 153, 154.*

In brief, by *upādāna*, clinging to sensuous desires interpreted to include all kinds of existence, and clinging to views (*kāma upādāna* and *diṭṭhi upādāna*) are meant; the third and fourth (*sīlabbata* and *attavāda*) being included in the *diṭṭhi upādāna*, wrong views.

Kāma here means both the craving and the craved object (*kilesa kāma* and *vatthukāma*) and when that craving for such desired objects becomes intensified, it is known as *kāma upādāna* or clinging. Man entertains thoughts of craving, and in proportion as he fails to ignore them, they grow till they get intensified to the degree of tenacious clinging.

All the various wrong views (*diṭṭhi*) that were in existence during the time of the Buddha could be included in Nihilism (*uccheda diṭṭhi*) and Eternalism (*sassata diṭṭhi*). To some, especially to the intellectuals, at times, the giving up of a view that they have cherished, is more difficult than giving up objects of sense. Of all wrong views the clinging to a belief in a soul or self or an abiding ego-entity (*attavāda upādāna*) is the strongest, foremost and most pernicious.

It is not without good reason that the Buddha rejected the notion of a self or soul (*attā*). In this conflux of mind and body which undergoes change without remaining the same for two consecutive moments, the Buddha sees not a lasting, indestructible soul. In other words, He could locate no abiding soul in this ever-changing 'creature'. The Enlightened One, therefore, emphatically denied an *attā* either in the five aggregates (material form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, consciousness) or elsewhere.

'All this,' He said, 'is void of an *attā* or anything of the nature of an *attā* (*suññaṁ idaṁ attena vā attaniyena vā*)[1] If this wrong notion is got rid of, all the existing wrong and pernicious views automatically cease.

X. BECOMING (BHAVA)

Upādāna paccayā bhavo (equal in Pāli Skt.), dependent on Clinging arises Becoming. Becoming is twofold, and should be understood as two processes: Kamma-Process (*kamma-bhava*) and Kamma-resultant Rebirth Process (*upapatti bhava*). *Kamma bhava* is the accumulated good and evil actions, the 'kammically active side of life.' *Upapatti bhava* is 'the kammically passive and morally neutral side of life', and signifies the kamma-resultant Rebirth-process in the next life. The next life may be any sphere or plane of sentient existence (*kāma bhava*), that of form (*rūpa bhava*). and that of formless existence (*arūpabhava*).

In the first clause (*avijjā paccayā sankhārā*), *sankhārā* is explained as good and evil actions (*kamma*); if that is so, is it not repetitive to say that *kammabhava*, mentioned here, also means good and evil actions? The *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, we must know, is concerned not only with the present life but with all the three lives—past, present and future. Kamma or the good and evil actions mentioned in the first clause, belong to the past—and on those past actions the present life depends. The *kamma* that is referred to here in this clause, '*upādāna paccayā bhavo*,' belongs to the present life and tha in turn causes future life. *Upādāna paccayā bhavo* means, clinging (*upādāna*) is the condition of the Karma-Process, or actions (*kamma-bhava*).

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[1] *Majjhima N.*, 22.

XI. BIRTH (JĀTI)

Bhava paccāyā jāti (equal in Pāli and Skt.), dependent on Becoming arises Birth. Here birth means not the actual child-birth; but the appearance of the five aggregates (material form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness) in the mother's womb This process is conditioned by *kamma-bhava*.

The present birth is brought about by the craving and clinging Kamma-volitions .(*taṇhā* and *upādāna*) of the past births, and the craving and clinging Kamma-volitions of the present birth bring about future rebirth. According to the teaching of the Buddha, it is this *kamma* - volition that divides beings into high and low.[1]

'Beings are heirs of their own deeds; bearers of their deeds, and their deeds are the womb out of which they spring,' and through their deeds alone they must change for the better, remake themselves, and win liberation from ill.

We are reaping what we have sown in the past; some of our reapings, we know, we have even sown in this life. In the selfsame way, our actions here mould the hereafter, and thus we begin to understand our position in this mysterious universe. If we, through our ignorance, craving and clinging in the long night of samsaric wandering, have not shaped ourselves as we are, how could there be such difference and dissimilarity between living beings as we see in the world today? Can we conceive of a mind, a single mind vast and confused enough to plan out such a motley sentient world as surrounds us?

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1. *Majjhima N., 135.*

Thus *kamma* is the corollary of rebirth, and rebirth on the other hand is the corollary of kamma. Here it may be asked: If kamma is the cause of rebirth and if Buddhism emphatically denies a soul or a transcendental ego how does this kammic process bring about rebirth?

Well, 'No force is ever lost, and there is no reason to think that the force manifest in each being as mind and body is ever lost. It ever undergoes transformations. It is changing now, every moment of our lives. Nor is it lost at death. The vitalizing mind flux is merely reset. It resets in conditions harmonizing with itself, even as broadcast sounds reset in a receiver tuned to the particular wave length. It is the resetting of this vital flux, in fresh conditions, that is called rebirth. Each reborn being starts with an unique set of latent possibilities, the accumulated experiences of the past. That is why character differs, why each endows himself with what theists call 'gifts', and infinite possibilities.'[1]

There is nothing that passes or transmigrates from one life to another. Is it not possible to light one lamp from another and in this process does any flame pass from one to the other? Do you not see the continuity of the flame? It is neither the same flame nor totally a different one.

Kammic process (*kammabhava*), therefore, is 'the force in virtue of which reaction follows actions'; it is the energy that out of a present life, conditions a future life in unending sequence.

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[1] "*What I Believe*", an article contributed to the Ceylon Observer, October, 1937, by Dr. Cassius A. Pereira, now Kassapa Thera.

'Desire gives rise to deed; deed gives rise to result; result exhibits itself as new corporeality endowed with new desire. Deed is as inevitably followed by result as the body by its shadow. This is merely the universal natural law of conservation of energy extended to the moral domain. As in the universe no energy can ever be lost, so also in the individual nothing can be lost of the resilient force accumulated by desire. This resilient energy is always transmuted into fresh life and we live eternally through our lust to live. The medium, however, that makes all existence possible is Kamma'.[1]

XII. AGEING AND DEATH (JARĀMARAṆA)

Jāti paccayā jarāmaraṇaṁ, dependent on Birth arise Ageing and Death; and with them naturally come sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Birth is inevitably followed by ageing and death; in the absence of birth there will be no ageing and death. Thus this whole mass of suffering arises dependent on the twelvefold Dependent Origination, *Paticca Samuppāda*. Ageing and death are followed by birth, and birth, on the other hand, is followed by ageing and death and the pair thus accompany each other in bewildering succession. Nothing mundane is still; it is all in a whirl. Man builds up wishful hopes and plans for the morrow, but one day, sudden perhaps, and unexpected, there comes the inevitable hour when death puts an end to this brief span of life, and brings our hopes to naught. So long as man is attached to existence through his ignorance, craving and clinging, to him death is not the final end. He will continue his career of whirling along with the wheel of existence, and will be twisted and torn between the spokes of agony. Thus, looking around us in the world at the different types of men and women about us, and at the differences in their varying fortunes, we know that these cannot be due to any mere chance.

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[1] Paul Dahlke, *Buddhist Essays* (London, 1908), p. 115.

An external power or agency that punishes the ill deeds and rewards the good deeds of beings has no place in Buddhist thought. Buddhists do not resort to any especially graced person or pray to any imperceptible individual to grant them Deliverance. Not even the supreme Buddha could redeem them from sansāra's bond. In ourselves lies the power to mould our lives. Buddhists are *Kammavādins*, believers in efficacy of actions, good and evil.

According to the teachings of the Buddha the direct cause of the distinctions and inequalities of birth in this life, is the *attakamma* or good and evil actions of each individual in past lives. In other words each man is reaping what he sowed in the past. In the selfsame way his actions here mould his hereafter.

In all actions, good or evil, mind is the most important factor. 'All mental states have mind as their forerunner; mind is chief, everything is mind-made. If one speaks or acts with a polluted mind, pain follows him in consequence as the cart wheel the foot of the beast of burden.' In like manner, in consequence of mentations made, words spoken and deeds done with a pure and placid mind, happiness follows him even as the inseparable shadow.[1]

Man is always changing either for good or for evil. This changing is unavoidable and depends entirely on his own actions and on nothing else.

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[1] *Dhammapada*, verse 1.

The world seems to be imperfect and ill-balanced. We are too often confronted with many a difficulty and shortcoming. Men differ from one another in many ways and aspects. Amongst us human beings, let alone the animal kingdom, we see some born as miserable wretches, sunk in deep distress and supremely unhappy; others born into a state of abundance and happiness enjoying a life of luxury and knowing nothing of the world's woe. Again a chosen few are gifted with keen intellect and great mental capacity, while many are wrapt in ignorance. How is it that some of us are blessed with health, beauty, sincere friends and amiable relatives while others are despicable weaklings, destitute and lonely? How is it that some are born to enjoy long life while others pass away in the full bloom of youth? Why are some blessed with affluence, fame and recognition? Why are some chosen few given in full measure all the things which human beings deserve while others are utterly neglected? These are intricate problems that demand a solution.

If we but pause for a moment and impartially investigate and intelligently inquire into things, we will find that these wide differences are not the work of an external agency or a superhuman being. We will find that we ourselves are responsible for our deeds whether good or ill and that we ourselves are the makers of our own Kamma.

Says the Buddha:

'According to the seed that is sown
So is the fruit ye reap therefrom.
Doer of good will gather good,
Doer of evil, evil reaps.
Sown is the seed and thou shalt taste
The fruit thereof.'

It is just impossible to conceive of an external agency or some all-powerful being who distributes his gifts to different persons in diverse measures, and who at times showers all his gifts on the same individual. Is it not more rational to say that:

> 'Whatever a man does, the same he in himself will find;
> The good man good; and evil that evil has designed:
> And so our deeds are all like seeds and bring forth
> fruit in kind.'

> 'Who toiled a slave may come anew a Prince
> For gentle worthiness and merit won.
> Who rulled a King may wander earth in rags
> For things done and undone.'

Buddhists do not blame the Buddha or a superhuman being or a deva or an especially graced person for the ills of mankind or praise them for the happiness men experience.

It is knowledge of *kamma* and *kamma-vipāka*, the law of cause and effect, or moral causation, that urges a true Buddhist to refrain from evil and do good. He who understands cause and effect knows well that it is his own actions and nothing else that make his life miserable or otherwise. He knows that the direct cause of the distinctions and inequalities of birth in this life, is the good and evil actions of each individual in past lives and in this life.

'Man today is the result of millions of repetitions of thought and action. He is not readymade; he becomes, and is still becoming. His character is predetermined by his own choice. The thought, the act which he chooses, that by habit he becomes.'

It should, however, be stated that according to Buddhism not everything that occurs is due to past actions. During the time of the Buddha, sectarians like the Niganthas, Makkhali-Gosāla and others, held the view that whatsoever the individual experiences, be they pleasant or unpleasant or neither—all come from former actions or past kamma.[1] The Buddha, however, rejected this theory of an exclusive determination by the past (*pubbekatahetu*) as unreasonable. Hence it is not true to say that all things that occur are due to past kamma or actions.

Is it not absurd for a student who fails in his examinations due to sheer laxity on his part, to attribute the failure to his past kamma? Is it not equaly ridiculous for a person to rush about carelessly, bang himself against a stone or some similar thing, and ascribe the mishap to his past actions or kamma? One can multiply such instances to show that not everything is due to actions performed in the past.

But when the causes and conditions of things are destroyed, automatically the effects also cease to be. Sorrow will disappear if the varied rootlets of sorrow's cause are eliminated. A man, for instance, who burns to ashes a mango seed, puts an end to its germinating power and that seed will never produce a mango plant. It is the same with all compounded things (*sankhāra*), animate or inanimate. As kamma is our own manufacture we have the power to break this endless chain, this wheel of existence (*bhava cakka*). Referring to those enlightened ones who have conquered themselves through the uprooting of the defilements, the Buddha says in the Ratana Sutta :

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[1] *Digha N.*, 2.

'Their past is extinct, a fresh becoming there is not, their minds are not attached to a future birth, their desires grow not — those wise ones go out even as this lamp.'[1]

The *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, with its twelve links starting with ignorance and ending in ageing and death, shows how man being fettered, wanders in *saṁsāra* birth after birth. But by getting rid of these twelve factors man can liberate himself from suffering and rebirth. The Buddha has taught us the way to put an end to this repeated wandering. It is by endeavouring to halt this Wheel of Existence that we may find the way out of this tangle. The Buddha word which speaks of this cessation of suffering is stated thus:

> 'Through the entire cessation of ignorance cease volitional formations;
> Through the cessation of volitional formations, consciousness;
> Through the cessation of consciousness, mentality-materiality;
> Through the cessation of mentality-materiality, the sixfold base;
> Through the cessation of sixfold base, contact;
> Through the eessation of contact, feeling;
> Through the cessation of feeling, craving;
> Through the cessation of craving, clinging;
> Through the cessation of clinging, becoming;
> Through the cessation of becoming, birth;
> Through the cessation of birth, cease ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.
> Thus does this whole mass of suffering cease.'[2]

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1. *Sutta Nipāta*, *Ratana Sutta*, verse 14.
2. *Anguttara N.*, *I. 176.*

Though in Buddhism time is considered as a mere concept (*paññatti*), in the language of the apparent truth (*sammuti sacca*) we speak of three periods of time; and the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* formula can be taken as representing three periods of time, namely, the past, the present and the future. The two factors Ignorance and Volitional Formations (*avijjā* and *saṅkhāra*) belong to the past; the next eight, beginning with consciousness (*viññāṇa*) belong to the present; and the last pair, birth and ageing and death, belong to the future.

In this Wheel of Existence there are then three connecting links (*sandhi*). Between Volitional Formations (*saṅkhāra*), the last factor of the past, and Consciousness (*viññāṇa*), the first factor of the present, there is one link consisting of past cause and present fruit (*hetu-phala*). Consciousness, Mentality-materiality, the Sixfold Base, Contact, and Feeling are effects in the present life caused by Ignorance and Volitional Formations of the past. Because of these five factors there come into being three other factors, namely, Craving, Clinging and Becoming which will cause birth in the future. Therefore, between Feeling and Craving there is another link consisting of present fruit and present cause (*phala-hetu*). Because of Craving, Clinging, and Becoming of the present there come into being Birth, Ageing and Death in the future. Therefore, between Becoming and Birth there is another link. These three links consist of four sections: i. Ignorance, Volitional Formations; ii. Consciousness, Mentality-materiality, Sixfold Base, Contact, Feeling; iii. Craving, Clinging, Becoming: iv. Birth, Ageing and Death (see diagram).

'Five causes in the past
And now a fivefold fruit,
Five causes now
And yet to come a fivefold fruit.'[1]

The text mentions *Ignorance* and *Volitional Formations* as past causes. "But one who is ignorant hankers, and hankering, clings, and with his clinging as condition there is becoming, therefore *Craving*, *Clinging* and *Becoming* are included as well. Hence it is said: 'In the previous kamma-process becoming, there is delusion, which is *ignorance*; there is accumulation, which is formations; there is attachment, which is craving; there is embracing, which is clinging; there is volition, which is becoming; thus these *five things* in the previous kamma-process becoming are conditions for rebirth-linking here (in the present becoming).' "[2]

Now the fivefold fruit in the present life as given in the text, is represented by five factors; *Consciousness*, *Mentality-materiality*, *the Sixfold Base*, *Contact*, *Feeling*.

There are five causes we now produce, of which the text gives only *Craving*, *Clinging* and *Becoming*. "But when Becoming is included, the *Formations* that precede it or that are associated with it are included too. And by including Craving and Clinging, the *Ignorance* associated with them, deluded by which a man performs kamma, is included too. So they are five,"[3]

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[1] *Visuddhi Magga, vol. II, p. 579.*

[2] Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification p. 669*, Colombo 1956, translation of *Visuddhi Magga.*

[3] *Ib. p. 671.*

Fivefold fruit we reap in the future. This is represented by *Consciousness*, *Mentality-materiality*, *Sixfold Base*, *Contact*, *Feeling*. The text gives also birth and ageing and death as the future fivefold fruit. Birth really is represented by these five beginning with Consciousness and ending in Feeling. Ageing and death is the ageing and death of these five.

On close analysis, it becomes clear that in this Dependent Origination, *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, in this repeated process of rebirth, in this Cycle of Existence there is nothing permanent, nothing of the kind of an enduring soul-entity that passes from one birth to the next. All *dhammas* are causally dependent, they are conditioned (*sabbe dhammā paṭiccasamuppannā*), and this process of events is utterly free from the notion of a *Jīvātma* or a *paramātma*, microcosmic soul, macrocosmic soul or cosmic soul. It was the recognition that this *ātma* was an illusion, a mirage, that made the Buddha's doctrine so singular and so revolutionary.

The Buddha declares: "To believe the doer of the deed will be the same as the one who experiences its results (in the next life): this is the one extreme. To believe that the doer of the deed, and the one who experiences its results, are two different persons: this is the other extreme. Both these extremes the Perfect One has avoided and taught the truth that lies in the middle of both, to wit: Through Ignorance conditioned are the Karma formations and so on (see formula). Thus arises this whole mass of suffering."

Hence the ancients said:

'There is no doer of a deed
Or one who reaps the deed's result;

Phenomena alone flow on —
No other view than this is right.

'For here there is no Brahmā God,
Creator of the round of births;
Phenomena alone flow on —
Cause and component their condition.'[1]

In concluding this essay on Dependent Origination, a confusion that may arise in the reader's mind should be forestalled. If according to Dependent Origination things are determined by conditions, one may be inclined to think that the Buddha encouraged fatalism or determinism, and that human freedom and 'free will' are put aside.

But what is fatalism? According to the Dictionary of Philosophy, 'Fatalism is determinism, especially in its theological form which asserts that all human *activities are predetermined by God.*' Determinism according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is the philosophical doctrine that human action is not free but necessarily determined by motives, which are regarded as external forces acting upon the will.' The doctrine of kamma refutes that. A clear understanding of Buddhism shows that the Buddha never subscribed to the theory that all things are unalterably fixed; that all things happen by inevitable necessity. Everywhere we see certain laws and conditions functioning, and one of these is *cetanā* or volition, which is *kamma*. There is no law giver, no external agency to interfere with the mental and material happenings. Through causes and conditions things come to be. With the cessation of conditions and causes things come to end.

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[1] Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification* p. 700, translation of *Visuddhi Magga*.

Thus is this endless play of action and reaction kept in perpetual motion by *kamma* concealed by ignorance and propelled by craving. In no way does this affect the freedom of the will and the responsibility of man for his acts (his *kamma*).

Lastly a word about 'free will': will is not something static. It is not a positive entity, or a self-existent thing. Will is quite momentary like any other mental state; there is, therefore, no 'will' as a 'thing' to be either free or not free. The truth is that 'will' is conditioned and a passing phenomenon.

To the genuine Buddhist the primary concern of life is not mere speculation, or vain voyages into the imaginary regions of high fantasy, but the gaining of true happiness and freedom from all ill. *Paṭicca Samuppāda* which speaks of ill and the cessation of ill, is the central conception of Buddhism, and represents the finest flower of Indian thought.

PAṬICCA - SAMUPPĀDA (Anuloma)
'DEPENDENT ORIGINATION' (In direct order)

i-ii. Avijjā-paccayā Sankhārā
ii-iii. Sankhāra-paccayā Viññāṇaṁ
iii-iv. Viññāṇa-paccayā Nāma-rūpaṁ
iv-v. Nāma-rūpa-paccayā Salāyatanaṁ
v-vi. Salāyatana-paccayā phasso
vi-vii. Phassa-paccayā Vedanā
vii-viii. Vedanā-paccayā Taṇhā
viii-ix. Taṇhā-paccayā Upādānaṁ
ix-x. Upādāna-paccayā Bhavo
x-xi. Bhava-paccayā Jāti
xi-xii. Jāti-paccayā Jarā-maranaṁ soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassûpāyāsā sambhavanti. Evam etassa kevalassa dukkha-kkhandhassa samudayo hoti.

PAṬICCA - SAMUPPĀDA (Paṭiloma)
'DEPENDENT ORIGINATION' (In reverse order)

i-ii. Avijjāya tv-eva asesa-virāga-nirodhā sankhāra-nirodho
ii-iii. Sankhāra-nirodhā Viññāṇa-nirodho
iii-iv. Viññāṇa-nirodhā Nāma-rūpa-nirodho
iv-v. Nāma-rūpa-nirodhā Salāyatana-nirodho
v-vi. Salāyatana-nirodhā Phassa-nirodho
vi-vii. Phassa-nirodhā Vedanā-nirodho
vii-viii. Vedanā-nirodhā Taṇhā-nirodho
viii-ix. Taṇhā-nirodhā Upādāna-nirodho
ix-x. Upādāna-nirodhā Bhava-nirodho
x-xi. Bhava-nirodhā Jāti-nirodho
xi-xii. Jāti-nirodhā Jarā-maranaṁ soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassûpāyāsā nirujjhanti. Evam etassa kevalassa dukkha-kkhandhassa nirodho hoti.

(*Saṅyutta - Nikāyo, ii, 1*)

Pāli in Sinhala Script

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TRANSLATION

(In Direct Order)

The Arising of the Wheel of Existence

i-ii. Dependent on Ignorance (*avijjā*) arise Volitional Formations (*saṅkhāra*)

ii-iii. Dependent on Volitional Formations (*saṅkhāra*) arises re-linking or rebirth Consciousness (*viññāṇa*)

iii-iv. Dependent on Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) arise Mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*)

iv-v. Dependent on Mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*) arises the Sixfold Base (*saḷāyatana*)

v-vi. Dependent on the Sixfold Base (*saḷāyatana*) arises Contact (*phassa*)

vi-vii. Dependent on Contact (*phassa*) arises Feeling (*vedanā*)

vii-viii. Dependent on Feeling (*vedanā*) arises Craving (*taṇhā*)

viii-ix. Dependent on Craving (*taṇhā*) arises Clinging (*upādanu*)

ix-x. Dependent on Clinging (*upādāna*) arises Becoming (*bhavo*)

x-xi. Dependent on Becoming (*bhava*) arises Birth (*jāti*)

xi-xii. Dependent on Birth (*jāti*) arise ageing and death (*jarā-maraṇa*), and sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. Thus there is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.

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